

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 SAJ-01 IO-10 ACDA-05 OMB-01 EB-07 /079 W

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R 191652Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

SECSTATE WASHDC 6366

INFO USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 18091

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, GW

SUBJECT: A GRAND COALITION: MUCH TALK BUT LITTLE

SUBSTANCE

REF: BONN 17773

SUMMARY: LEADING SPD, CDU AND FDP POLITICIANS, INCLUDING SCHMIDT, BIEDENKOPF, KOHL, BARZEL AND BANGEMANN, CONTINUE TO REJECT THE IDEA OF A GRAND COALITION. WEHNER AND STRAUSS HAVE MADE NO FURTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE SUBJECT. END SUMMARY

1. THE POSSIBILITY OF A GRAND COALITION CONTINUES TO BE A FAVORITE QUESTION POSED BY POLITICAL JOURNALISTS, WHO HAVE THUS MANAGED TO KEEP THE ISSUE ALIVE IN THE MEDIA. SO FAR, HOWEVER, THE REACTIONS OF LEADING POLITICIANS
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HAVE ALL BEEN DECIDEDLY NEGATIVE.

2. CHANCELLOR SCHMIDT, WHEN ASKED IN A TELEVISION INTERVIEW ON NOVEMBER 18 TO INDICATE HOW GREAT THE POSSIBILITY OF A GRAND COALITION IS, REPLIED "ZERO POINT ZERO ZERO ZERO PERCENT." BIEDENKOPF'S REACTION HAS BEEN EQUALLY CLEAR. IN AN INTERVIEW WITH "DIE ZEIT" PUBLISHED NOVEMBER 15, HE DECLARED THAT "THERE WILL NOT BE A GRAND COALITION. A GRAND COALITION CANNOT SOLVE ANYTHING -- EVEN IN DIFFICULT TIMES. MOREOVER, AN ELIMINATION OF THE OPPOSITION AS A POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE STRENGTHENS THE TENDENCY OF THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN TIMES OF CRISES, TO SEEK THE OPPOSITION IN THE STREETS." HELMUT KOHL, ALREADY ON RECORD IN OPPOSITION TO THE IDEA, TOLD "WELT AM SONNTAG" NOVEMBER 17 THAT WEHNER'S PURPOSE IN TALKING ABOUT A GRAND COALITION WAS "TO DISCIPLINE THE FDP, KEEP THE SPD LEFT IN LINE AND MAKE THE CDU/CSU UNCERTAIN." HE EMPHASIZED THAT A GRAND COALITION IS NOT A SUBJECT OF DISCUSSION FOR THE CDU AND THAT ALTHOUGH THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IS DIFFICULT, A NATIONAL EMERGENCY IS NOT IN SIGHT. BARZEL WAS QUOTED IN "SPIEGEL" AS STATING HE CONSIDERS A GRAND COALITION NEITHER POSSIBLE NOR NECESSARY AT THE MOMENT OR IN THE FUTURE. FDP SECRETARY GENERAL BANGEMANN HAS SAID THAT "A GRAND COALITION IS NOT A POLITICAL POSSIBILITY CONCERNING WHICH WE MUST TAKE A POSITION."

3. BARZEL HAS ALSO TOLD US THAT HE OPPOSES THE IDEA OF A GRAND COALITION AND SEES NO POSSIBILITIES FOR IT AT THE PRESENT TIME. HE COMMENTED THAT SUCH A COALITION WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY IF THERE WERE A HEIGHTENED SENSE OF CRISIS, AND THAT THERE IS NOT A CRISIS ATMOSPHERE NOW EXCEPT THAT WHICH THE PRESS IS TRYING TO GENERATE. HE NOTED ALSO THAT A GRAND COALITION WOULD PRESUPPOSE A WILLINGNESS (WHICH DOES NOT EXIST NOW) ON THE PART OF THE GEMEINDE, LAENDER AND BUND TO MAKE A COORDINATED EFFORT TO SOLVE THE FRG'S FINANCIAL PROBLEMS.
HILLENBRAND

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT, PERSONAL OPINION, PRESS COMMENTS, SPEECHES, TELEVISION BROADCASTING, MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CollinP0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BONN18091
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740334-0779
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741132/aaaabazp.tel
Line Count: 98
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: BONN 17773
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CollinP0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 MAY 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <18 MAR 2003 by CollinP0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: A GRAND COALITION: MUCH TALK BUT LITTLE SUBSTANCE
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, GE, (SCHMIDT), (BIEDENKOPE), (KOHL), (BARZEL), (BANGEMANN)
To: USBERLIN STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005